

## Christendom's Debt to St. Dominic

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THERE is a chapter in the history of Europe which seems never yet to have been adequately written. It is the chapter which should record the debt owed by Europe, and all Christendom, to St. Dominic and his sons, the Order of Preachers, during a period of Europe's greatest crisis. At a time when every force, spiritual as well as political, threatened to tear Christendom asunder worse than, three centuries later, it was torn asunder by the Reformation, St. Dominic rose up and did more than any man of his own time to keep it one; and the chapter which would tell what both he and his Order did, and how they did it, would be a worthy chapter for any author's pen.

Even a casual survey will show both the dangers of the time, and the work which St. Dominic began. The Saint was born in 1170, a few months before the martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and well within a hundred years of the death of Gregory VII, Hildebrand. Frederick Barbarossa was reigning Emperor, and had still twenty years to run; the Battle of Legnano (1176) had not yet been fought, which curbed his ambition to be suzerain lord of the Papacy, and indeed of all the world. Already the cry of Guelph against Ghibeline was passing from Germany to Italy; that meant a new antagonism, not only of the temporal against the spiritual authority, but of the rising cities and republics against their aristocratic overlords. It meant that for a second time the authority of the Papacy was questioned; for the cities and the burghers looked to the Pope to protect them in their wars of liberation, while the aristocracy that had been saw in him only a menace to their ancient rights.

This double cleavage between Church and State had opened very wide another chasm. Anti-popes there had been in the Church's history, but now they became a more deliberate weapon in the hands of those who would bring

the Holy See to subjection. If an Emperor found the reigning Pope troublesome, he would raise up a Pope of his own, one who would promise beforehand to serve him. If in Rome itself a rival faction objected to a Pope-elect, it would push forward its own candidate and have him crowned before the other. During the seventy years that preceded the birth of Dominic, the Church had seen no less than eight anti-popes; one was reigning when he was born, the tool of Barbarossa, under the name of Calixtus III (1168-1177).

Yet another danger was the growing self-consciousness of the nations outside the Empire. The age of St. Dominic was the age, in England, of Henry II, Richard Cœur de Lion, and John; an age of constant struggle, not only till the death of St. Thomas, but continually after concerning election to Sees, ending in censures, and excommunications, and interdicts. In France it was the age of Louis VII and Philip Augustus; an age of incessant feudal wars, waged in defiance of the Pope, each time questioning his right to interfere. In Spain and Portugal we have a bruised reed, enfeebled in the south by Moorish intrusion, in the north conquering with the Albigenses in the hope of political gain.

In the meantime outside the boundaries of Christendom a new force had arisen which in more ways than one threatened to undermine all order. The crusades had done their work, as well as it would ever be done, and now were degenerating into confusion. Jealousies between rival States, religious fervor undermined by sensual indulgence, barbarism revived under the garb of zeal, all these more than any strong foe had broken them to pieces; while Dominic was yet a young man Jerusalem fell once more into the hands of Saladin. But that was not the worst. From that time onward, through Spain, through southern Italy, through Bulgaria and Hungary, the new thought of the East, with its pagan philosophy and learning, and its relics of the ancient heresies, began to filter through and to undermine the faith of all the southern nations. Fantastic beliefs, still more fantastic practices, now made their appearance, coupled with a fanaticism hitherto unknown in the West; all these, encouraged by a new and degraded morality, in places grew in force till they threatened, not only the unity of Christendom, but all government and all social order altogether.

Out of these, new heresies now appeared. Ancient sects,

all but dead, took on new life under the influence from the East. The fanatic effort after a simpler life encouraged to every extravagance. The passion for independence, kindled by the new democracy, provoked to action by strifes among rulers, made men welcome any creed which would promise unlicensed freedom. The tendency to centralization, in Church and State, roused a rival longing for individual liberty. An infidel philosophy, especially that from the Arabs, stirred in the schools an uncurbed speculation. Added to this the wealth and leisure of the clergy too often drove men, who might well have otherwise obeyed, into the ranks of anarchy. Fanatic enthusiasm, free-thinking rationalism, Manicheism and its offspring, all these were strongly represented; and though the reign of Innocent III (1198-1216) seemed for the time to bring order out of chaos, still looking back we may well wonder how Christendom, attacked politically, socially, and in its very essence, was able to stand the strain.

It is true that to meet this triple invasion the Church was better prepared than she might have been a century before. Though worldly prelates were still only too common, nevertheless they were on the decrease; the regulations against an unworthy clergy had also had their effect. The very opulence of the Church now began to bring about its own nemesis; unscrupulous plunderers, from high and low, easily made it their prey. And with this reformation, even more steadily went that of the religious life. Old Orders revived, new Orders were founded; though the Carthusians had existed for almost a century, yet it was not till 1176, when Dominic was yet a child, that they received formal approbation. Moreover there still lived all through Christendom that sense of a common family which none of these disintegrating forces had hitherto succeeded in breaking. The nations were not yet strong enough to stand apart, much less to separate themselves from the rest of Christendom; and the coming of Innocent III seemed for a time to give a new life to this consciousness of unity.

Still the disintegrating forces were there, none the less potent because their significance was not yet recognized; so that we, looking back, may well wonder that the break-up did not come three centuries before it actually did. Instead we witness an extraordinary paradox; the evils of the twelfth century were followed by the thirteenth, called by many the most glorious of our era. We ask ourselves what can have

brought this about; we reply that in great measure it was due to St. Dominic and his Order of Preachers, more at least to them than to any other influence making for good in that age of transition.

Dominic Guzman was a Castilian, a son of noble family, brought up with that sense of religion before all else, not uncommon in his country, or throughout Europe in his day. From the first he was a student; but much more he was marked by an extraordinary sympathy for his fellow-men, and a lavish generosity which followed it. For their sakes he would sell his books; he would even sell himself that he might redeem another from slavery. Also from the beginning his bent was towards contemplation; we are told that for nine years together, after his ordination, he scarcely ever went beyond the grounds of the cathedral of Osma.

But circumstances which we need not here consider, took him into France; other circumstances sent him to Languedoc, to join in combating the Albigenian heresy. Here at once he learnt his lesson. The weakness of the Church in the encounter was largely due to two causes: first, the self-contented and luxurious lives of her representatives; and, secondly, their lack of learning. With all their extravagances the heretics were not ignorant men; moreover, they had learning, drawn from far away and from the distant past, of which their orthodox rivals knew nothing. Another thing he discovered; the influence of women for or against any cause in which religion is concerned. The Albigenes had discovered this long before, and had made full use of women for their propaganda. It was to counteract this influence that he began that institution which later grew into the nuns of his Second Order.

But these were chiefly years of experience; it was not till the year 1214, when Dominic was already forty-four years of age, that we find him beginning his great scheme. For the purpose of this essay, which in no way proposes to describe the spirit of the Saint or of his Order, we may sum up his mind in three steps. In the first place he saw that if heresy was to be successfully combated, if the Faith was to be upheld, learning, and great learning was essential; the time had passed when men would be converted by mere holiness of life. The stream of learning had begun to flow from many sources; mankind had begun to lift up its head and ask questions never heard before. It would not be con-

tent with negative or evasive answers, and that it might be answered it was essential that its teachers should know.

Secondly, following upon this, was the need that orthodoxy should be uniform. It would not do that one answer should be given here and another there; it was necessary that what served the Moor in Spain should differ in nothing from that which was given to the Albigensian in Languedoc, to the free-thinker in Lombardy, to the German politician, or the heathen of Hungary. And, thirdly, it must reach as far as possible. The Albigensian heresy, local though for the most part it appeared, was by no means local either in its origin or in its spirit. There was disease in the whole body, which might anywhere at any time declare itself; moreover, for the understanding of the evil at one spot, it was necessary to meet it and know it at another.

These were the three main principles which will strike any student of history who considers the enormous influence of St. Dominic and the Dominicans during the thirteenth century and after. From the first the founder definitely knew what he had before him. Unlike St. Benedict, whose work grew with the ages beyond its founder's conception; unlike St. Francis of Assisi, whose dream was of one main idea; St. Dominic took in at once both the goal towards which he meant to work and the means by which he would attain it. He would be no less a monk than Benedict, but he would also be an apostle, and when the monk and the apostle conflicted the latter must prevail. He would be no less poor than his friend Francis, but he would also have the means to learn, and even to excel in learning; for that end even poverty must give place. Behind all must be sanctity, second to that of no saint; but it must be interpreted in terms of the apostolate in a way that it had never been before.

With this plan in his mind we may watch him develop it. He began in Toulouse with six brethren; it did not seem to matter much who they were, provided he could be sure of his men. He set them to study under the most learned scholar he could find in the place; meanwhile he himself looked afield. The center of learning in all Europe at the time was Paris, therefore in Paris he must establish his first center; in Paris more than anywhere else his disciples must both study and make their mark. Second only to Paris was Bologna; therefore in Bologna, too, he must have a footing. From these two centers he must spread out, and yet in such

a way that the whole should not be weakened. This was his second step. The ambition should be the doctorate at Paris, that would secure eminence in learning; but once it was attained, then the doctors should be sent elsewhere, in their turn to become centers of truth and learning wherever they might settle. He would move them from place to place, draw them back to the center and again send them out; thus would they at once bring new life to the core, and keep themselves in harmony with one another.

Such a network of sanctity and learning Dominic proceeded to spread over Europe. In 1216, when he first received official sanction for his Order, it numbered only sixteen members; five years later, when the Saint died, it had already sixty institutions, spread through eight provinces, Spain, Provence, France, Lombardy, Rome, Germany, England, and Hungary. Already he had brought the intellect of Europe together. He had spread out the learning of Paris, and in return he had begun to draw to the common center the best intellect of every country. While the nations were dividing, while the new thought from without was unbalancing the minds of men, he had provided the means by which all, everywhere, might think together, and might keep their balance even while they drank in the new things their generation had to teach them.

The effect was immediately manifest. The first thing that strikes us is the utter separation that the movement brought out between the political and the social order of the time. While the powers were contending with one another, the scholars of every country were freely intermingling, teaching and learning from each other as if they were of one common country; in Paris during all this century both professors and students were far more foreign than French. Underneath the threatened divisions a strong unity of thought was being welded among the people. Next is the variety and growth. Though from the common center the Preachers took the same curriculum, and the same idea of a *studium generale*; still wherever they went they were alive to the needs and the possibilities of any particular place. They adapted themselves to the liberal arts; they opened the way to the sciences; they were the first to build up the systematic study of Aristotle; they introduced the languages into their curricula; in Spain especially, strewn as it was with Jews and Arabs, Hebrew and Arabic were made of

great importance, with later consequences to Europe which can scarcely be measured.

Nor was it only in the field of learning that the Preachers preserved order and growth where chaos threatened. In civil life their influence was soon felt. They came to kings and princes with a wider experience than their own; we do not wonder that one after another the rulers of France, England, Germany, Spain, and Portugal took them into their counsel. The same was true of the fast-growing cities, especially in Lombardy; when a century later we find the Dominican tertiary, Catherine of Siena, acting as peacemaker among the contending Italian republics, we do but see in her one of a long line of Dominicans who had used their influence successfully to keep the peace before. Lastly, they gave to the people a new life. We know of their spread of the devotion of the Rosary; nowhere has this left a more lasting mark than in England; in addition, now there began to spread out as never before the practical and positive instruction of the poor and unlettered. Here more than anywhere else they joined hands with the sons of St. Francis; but they had the advantage in that sense of unity and compactness which brought the force of the whole Order to bear wherever any single friar went, while it guarded against any danger of personal error.

This then, in the roughest outline, is the debt which Europe owes to the Order of St. Dominic; to illustrate it in any detail would require many volumes. While Christendom was on the verge of tearing itself asunder, thanks, mainly, to the rising political influences, the Dominicans kept the intellect of the nations one. While the tendency to class war was threatening, they educated high and low, aristocrats and burghers, in the same classrooms, which were free, following the same lectures. Heresy was lifting up its head, and rulers would suppress it by force of arms; the Dominicans chose another course, that of meeting and enlightening those who were in error. Paganism had on its side a learning, a philosophy, and a literature which Christendom had not; the sons of St. Dominic faced all three, handed on the sciences to the universities, harnessed the philosophy of the pagans to the Church, purified literature till it emerged in the immortal perfection of Dante. In a true sense they were the founders of schools and of education, as the civilized world now understands these terms. There had been

education before, but it was chiefly at haphazard; decrees of general counsels had hitherto failed to establish order out of the confusion. The Dominicans changed it all. Under their organization the universities received new life, and bore fruit such as had never been seen before, and perhaps has never been seen since. Complete staffs were found for the conventual schools, with a fixed curriculum, yet never so fixed but that it could expand.

During all this time their literary output was enormous. We need not fall back only on Albertus Magnus and Aquinas; as Shakespeare has tended to cast a shadow over the great dramatists of his time, so these two have overshadowed the names of many who might otherwise have been world-famous. While Aquinas was yet but a boy, the Dominicans in Paris had already begun the revision of the Vulgate. In philosophy and theology commentaries and manuals for the use of students poured out from the friars' cells. In apologetics we have not only the "Summa contra Gentiles"; other Dominican writers were equally occupied with a "Summa contra Catharos et Waldenses," and other works of the kind, which to this day may be considered our chief source of information concerning the controversies of the time. The Dominicans wrote the first systematic books on pedagogy; they founded the study of history; they met the tide of humanism which was then beginning to flow; the age of art which followed has no worthier names than those of the Dominicans, Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolommeo.

It was well for England and for Oxford that St. Dominic took them into his vision. Before his death he had included them within his net and had begun his foundation in the university. Before his time Oxford had begun to be a center of learning for these islands; after it, perhaps chiefly because of it, Oxford became a European center, second only to its elder sister, Paris. From Oxford the friars, as they had done elsewhere, spread out across the country, and thence to Scotland and Ireland; it was chiefly thanks to them that, when the time came, the Wycliffite heresy found its antidote prepared and already in the field. From that day till the reign of Henry VIII, Oxford had her place in the intellectual concert of Europe; and it was in great measure the sons of St. Dominic that kept it for her, crossing and re-crossing the Channel that the learning of Europe might be



brought here, and that in her turn England might make her contribution to the common heritage.

This, then, is the benefit for which Christendom, and England certainly not least of all, is indebted to St. Dominic and the Dominicans, in the thirteenth century and after. History tends to concentrate on politics, on the making and unmaking of nations and the strong arms that strike for power, but in every age the strongest force of all is one that lies beneath, whose presence is seldom recorded. During the Great War, for all the upheaval that it caused, there were more people in Europe, in Germany, France, and England, to whom it had no interest except as a ghastly disaster than there were of those to whom it was a matter of importance. Much more was it in the Middle Ages, when war was waged at the whim of an overlord, about which the rest of men knew nothing and cared less. St. Dominic saw this, and it was upon those men that he concentrated. While monarchs fought their battles as they would, he kept the mass of thinking men together; when the crisis was over, Europe found itself more one than, perhaps, it had ever been before.

# On Catholic Action

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ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS  
PIUS XI

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE  
POPE

## III. CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

*(Continued)*

BESIDES, there is involved another right of the Church, equally inviolable, to fulfil the imperative Divine commission entrusted to her by her Divine Founder, to bring to souls—to bring to every soul—all the treasures of truth and of good, doctrinal and practical, which He Himself brought to the world. “Going therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. xxviii, 19-20).

Guard and watch over “those little ones that believe in me” (Matt. xviii, 6), “whose is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xix, 14), “whose angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. xviii, 10). “Woe to him that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me” (Matt. xviii, 6).

And of what great importance are the first years and the age of youth in putting into effect the universal and complete mandate, is demonstrated by the Divine Master Himself, the Creator and the Redeemer of souls, by His example and by these particularly memorable words which are also particularly formidable: “Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such” (Matt. xix, 14).

And here We find Ourselves in the presence of a contrast between authentic affirmations on the one hand and no less authentic facts on the other hand, which reveal, without the slightest possibility of doubt, the proposal, already in great part actually put into effect, to monopolize completely the young, from the tenderest years up to manhood and womanhood, and all for the exclusive advantage of a

party, of a regime based on ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true and real pagan worship of the State, which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church.

To propose and promote such a monopoly, to persecute for this reason Catholic Action, as has been done for some time more or less openly or under cover, to reach this end by striking Catholic Action in the way that has recently occurred, is truly and actually to prevent children from going to Jesus Christ, since it impedes them from going to His Church and even arrives at the point of snatching them with violence from the bosom of both, because where the Church is, there is Jesus Christ.

The Church of Jesus Christ has never contested the rights and the duties of the State concerning the education of its citizens, and We Ourselves have recalled and proclaimed them in Our recent Encyclical Letter on the Christian Education of Youth; rights and duties which are unchallengeable as long as they remain within the limits of the State's proper competency, a competency which in its turn is clearly indicated and determined by the functions of the State, functions certainly not only bodily and material but functions that, by the necessity of their character, are contained within the limits of the natural, the earthly, and the temporary.

The universal Divine mandate with which the Church of Jesus Christ has been incommunicably and absolutely commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself, is to concern herself with eternity, with Heaven, and with the supernatural—with that order of things which, on one side, it is of the strictest obligation for every rational creature to consider and to which, on the other side, it is necessary by the very nature of things to subordinate and coordinate the remainder.

The Church of Jesus Christ is certainly acting within the limits of its mandate, not only when it puts into souls the first indispensable beginnings and elements of supernatural life, but also when it assists and encourages the growth of this supernatural life according to the opportunities and the capacities of persons and in the ways and by the means which, in the Church's judgment, seem suitable also with the purpose of preparing capable and efficient

collaborators with the Apostolic Hierarchy and clergy. It is Jesus Christ Himself who made the solemn declaration that He came precisely that souls might have not only some beginning or some element of supernatural life, but that they might have it in greater abundance. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John x, 10).

It was Jesus Christ Himself who laid the first foundations of Catholic Action. It was Christ Himself who, choosing and educating the Apostles and disciples as collaborators in His Divine Apostolate, gave an example which at once was followed by the first holy Apostles, as the Sacred Text itself substantiates.

It is, consequently, an unjustified pretense and, indeed, irreconcilable with the name and the profession of being a Catholic, to come forward to teach the Church and its Head what is sufficient and what must be sufficient for the education and Christian formation of souls and to enunciate and promote in society, chiefly for the young, the principles of faith and of their full efficiency in life. To the unjustifiable presumption must be added also very clear evidence of the absolute incompetence and complete ignorance of the matters under discussion. Recent events must have opened the eyes of all, since they have demonstrated with evidence that which has come to pass within a few years, not in fact saving, but rather disrupting and destroying the true religious sentiment of Christian and civil education.

You know, Venerable Brethren, Bishops of Italy, from your pastoral experience, that it is a grave and destructive error to believe and to make believe that the work of the Church done by Catholic Action and through Catholic Action is substituted and made superfluous by the religious instruction in the schools and by ecclesiastical assistance of the associations of youth of the party and of the regime. Both are certainly necessary. Without them the schools and the associations would inevitably and quickly become, by logical and psychological necessity, pagan things.

Necessary, therefore, they are, but they are not sufficient. As a matter of fact, with such religious instructions and such ecclesiastical assistance, the Church of Jesus Christ can develop only a minimum of her spiritual and supernatural effectiveness, and this minimum amid surroundings and in an environment which do not depend on the

Church, but are disturbed and worried by many other scholastic matters and by many other exercises, and subject to immediate superiors often little or not at all favorably disposed and occasionally exercising by the example of their lives an influence contrary to their words.

We have said that recent events have proved beyond the shadow of doubt that a few years have been sufficient not to save but to cause to be lost and to be destroyed the true religious sentiment, We do not say alone of Christian, but even of moral and of civil education.

We have seen, in fact, in action a species of religion which rebels against the directions of higher religious authorities, and imposes or encourages the non-observance of these directions—an attitude of religion which is persecution and attempted destruction of that which the supreme head of the religion notably most appreciates and cherishes; a religious sentiment that goes to extremes, and permits others to indulge, in insulting words and actions against the person of the Father of all the Faithful, even to cry out "Down with the Pope and death to him!" This is real teaching of parricide! It is a semblance of religion which cannot in any way be reconciled with Catholic doctrine and practice, but is rather something which must be considered contrary to both. The contradiction is most grave in itself and most destructive in its effects when it not only consists of external action perpetrated and carried into effect, but when also there are principles and maxims proclaimed as fundamental and constituting a program.

A conception of the State which makes the young generations belong entirely to it, without any exception from the tenderest years up to adult life, cannot be reconciled by a Catholic with the Catholic doctrine and cannot either be reconciled with the natural right of the family. It is not possible for a Catholic to reconcile with Catholic doctrine the pretense that the Church and the Pope must limit themselves to the external practices of religion, such as Mass and the Sacraments, and then to say that the rest of education belongs to the State.

The erroneous and false doctrines and maxims that We have, up to the present, already pointed out and deplored, have occurred many times during these last few years, and, as is well known, We have never, with God's help, done any less than Our apostolic duty in indicating and answering

them with the just claims of genuine Catholic doctrine and with the enunciation of the inviolable rights of the Church of Jesus Christ and of the souls redeemed by His Precious Blood.

But, notwithstanding the judgments and the expectations and the suggestions that have come to Us from many sources worthy of the greatest consideration, We have always refrained from formal and explicit condemnations, and We have even gone so far as to believe possible and to favor the compatibility of cooperation that to others seemed inadmissible. We have done this because We were thinking and desiring that there would remain always the possibility, or at least doubt, that We had to deal with assertions and exaggerated actions which were sporadic and with elements which were not sufficiently representative; in a word, with assertions and axioms which referred in their censurable parts rather to persons and circumstances than, strictly speaking, to a part of a program. The latest events, the assertions that preceded these events and accompanied them, and the comment made, take away from Us the desired possibility and so We must say that one is not a Catholic—except through Baptism and in name, in contrast with the obligations of the name of Catholic and with the Baptismal promises—who adopts and develops a program that makes his doctrines and maxims so opposed to the rights of the Church of Jesus Christ and of souls, one who misunderstands, combats and persecutes Catholic Action which, as is universally known, the Church and its Head regard as very dear and precious.

You ask Us, Venerable Brethren, in view of what has taken place, what is to be thought about the formula of an oath which even little boys and girls are obliged to take about executing without discussion orders from an authority which, as we have seen and experienced, can give orders against all truth and justice and in disregard of the rights of the Church and its souls, which are already by their very nature, sacred and inviolable, and to have them swear to serve with all their strength, even to the shedding of blood, the cause of a revolution that snatches the youth from the Church and from Jesus Christ and which educates its own young forces to hate, to deeds of violence, and to irreverence, not excluding the person of the Pope himself, as the latest facts have very evidently demonstrated. When

you place the question in such terms, the answer from the Catholic point of view and also from a human point of view is, inevitably, only one, and We, Venerable Brethren, do not wish to do otherwise than to confirm the answer which you already have given: such an oath as it stands is illicit.

#### IV. ANXIETIES FOR THE FUTURE

And behold Us now in the throes of great anxieties which We know are also yours, Venerable Brethren, especially you who are Bishops in Italy. We are preoccupied, first of all, by the fact that so many of Our children, even young boys and girls, are inscribed and have taken membership with that oath. We deeply pity so many consciences tortured by doubts (torments and doubts of whose existence We have incontrovertible evidence) precisely because of that oath as it was interpreted, especially after the recent occurrences.

Realizing the many difficulties of the present times, and knowing that membership in the party and the oath are for countless persons a necessary condition for their career, for bread, for life itself, We have sought to find a way which would restore tranquility to these consciences, reducing to the least possible the external difficulties of the situation. It seems to Us that such a means, for those who have already received the membership card, would be to make for themselves before God, in their own consciences, the reservation such as "Safeguarding the laws of God and of the Church," or "In accordance with the duties of a good Christian," with the firm proposal to declare also externally such a reservation if the need of it might arise.

We would wish also that Our prayer would reach even there, whence these dispositions and orders come; the prayer of a Father who wishes to tranquilize the consciences of so many of his sons in Jesus Christ, that is, that the same reservation be introduced into the form of the oath, unless it might be wished to do something even better, far better, and this is to omit the oath altogether, since it is always an act of religion and certainly has no appropriate place in taking membership in a political party.

We have tried to speak with calm and with serenity, and also with all clarity. However, We cannot be otherwise than concerned that We be well understood, We do not say by you, Venerable Brethren, always, and now more than

ever, so united to Us in thoughts and in sentiments, but by every one.

With everything that We have said up to the present, We have not said that We wished to condemn the party as such. We have intended to point out and to condemn that much in the program and in the action of the party which We have seen and have understood to be contrary to Catholic doctrine and Catholic practice and therefore irreconcilable with the name and with the profession of Catholics. And in doing this, We have fulfilled a precious duty of Our episcopal ministry toward Our dear sons who are members of the party, so that they can rest tranquil with the proper consciences of Catholics.

We believe, then, that We have thus at the same time accomplished a good work for the party itself, because what interest and success can the party have in a Catholic country like Italy in maintaining in its program ideas and maxims and practices which cannot be reconciled with a Catholic conscience? The conscience of peoples, as that of individuals, finishes always by returning to itself and seeking ways that for a longer or shorter period of time they may have lost from view or have abandoned.

And lest it be alleged that Italy is Catholic but anti-clerical, We intend, for the sake of caution, to say something in this regard. You, Venerable Brethren, who in the great and small dioceses live in continuous contact with the good population of all the country, you know and you see every day how they, without pretending or without misleading, are completely foreign to any anti-clerical spirit.

It is known by all who are at all familiar with the history of the country that anti-clericalism has had in Italy the importance and the strength which Masonry and Liberalism generated here. In our days, when the unanimous enthusiasm over the Lateran Treaty united and inspired with joy all the country as never before, it would not have been possible for anti-clericalism to reassert itself if it had not been provoked and encouraged on the vigil of the signing of the Treaty. During the latest occurrences, directions and orders have, at will, made it enter into action and made it cease action, as all have been able to see and to verify. And it is beyond any doubt that it would be sufficient and will always be sufficient, to hold it in its proper place, to have a hundredth or a thousandth part of



the measures applied which so long have molested Catholic Action and which culminated recently in that proceeding about which now all the world knows.

However, other and very grave worries about the future concern us. It was affirmed, in a meeting which was most official and most solemn—a meeting which was held immediately after these last acts which were for Us and for the Catholics of all Italy and of all the world so sad and depressing—it was professed that there was “an unchanged respect toward the Catholic religion and its Supreme Head.” “An unchanged respect”—therefore that same respect without variation which We have already experienced; therefore that respect which had its expression in so many and so vastly extensive hateful police measures, prepared in deep silence, as a betrayal, and executed with lightning-like suddenness on the very vigil of Our birthday, an occasion of many acts of kindness and of courtesy toward Us on the part of the Catholic world and also of the non-Catholic world; therefore that same respect that excels in permitting acts of violence and irreverence to be perpetrated without interference.

For what, therefore, can We hope? Or, better, what must We not expect? Someone has asked if such a strange method of speaking and of writing in such circumstances, in such close proximity to those occurrences, was completely free from irony, which would really be a sad irony, which for Our own part We wish to exclude. In the same context of the communication, and in immediate relation to the “unchanged respect,” there is an insinuation about “refuges” and “protection” given to the still remaining opponents of the party, and the directors of the 9,000 groups of Fascists in Italy are ordered to direct their attention to this situation. More than one of you has already experienced and given Us also the sad information about the effect of these remarks and these insinuations and these orders, for there occurred a new outbreak of hateful surveillance, or denunciations, of intimidation.

How, therefore, can We prepare for the future? What can We, and must We, not expect (for We do not fear, since the fear of God expels the fear of man) if, as We have reasons to believe, it is determined not to permit Our Catholic youth to reunite, even silently, unless the directors are threatened with bitter punishment?

What new threats, therefore, We ask Ourselves, does the future prepare and hold?

#### V. SHARING IN HOPES AND PRAYERS

Actually, in this extreme of doubts to which men have reduced Us, every worry vanishes, disappears, and Our spirit opens to the most confident and consoling hopes, because the future is in the hands of God and God is with Us. And "If God be for us, who is against us?" (Rom. viii, 31).

A sign and a sensible proof of the assistance and of the Divine favor We already see and feel in your helpfulness and cooperation, Venerable Brethren. If We have been well informed, it has been said recently that now Catholic Action is in the hands of the Bishops and there is nothing more to fear. And up to this point, the statement is good—very good—except for that phrase *nothing more*, as if to say that before there was something to fear, and except also that word *now*, as if before, and from the beginning, Catholic Action was not always essentially diocesan and dependent on the Bishops (as We have above pointed out), and for this reason, also, principally for this, We have always nourished the most certain confidence that Our directions were observed. For this, after the promised unfailing Divine assistance, We remain, and We shall remain, with the most serene confidence, even if tribulation—let Us say the exact word, even if persecution shall continue and intensify.

We know that you are, and you know yourselves that you are, Our brethren in the episcopacy and in the apostolate. We know, and you know, too, Venerable Brethren, that you are the successors of those Apostles that St. Paul called, with words of supreme sublimity, the "glory of Christ" (II Cor. viii, 23).

You Bishops of Italy know that no mortal man—not even the head of a State or of a Government, but the Holy Ghost,—has placed you there in places which Peter assigned to you to rule in the Church of God. These and so many other holy and sublime things that concern you, Venerable Brethren, are evidently ignored or forgotten by him who thinks of you and calls you, Bishops of Italy, "Officials of the State," from which the very formula of the oath which it is necessary for you to make to the Sovereign clearly dis-

tinguishes and separates you, for the oath especially states, "as is convenient for a Catholic Bishop."

Great, therefore, and truly a measureless reason for hoping for the best, is the immense chorus of prayers that the Church of Jesus Christ has offered up from all parts of the world to the Divine Founder of the Church and to His Blessed Mother for the Church's visible head, the successor of Peter, just in the same way as was done twenty centuries ago when persecution assailed Peter himself: the prayers of sacred shepherds of souls and of peoples, of clergy and of Faithful, of members of Religious Orders, of adults and of young and of children; prayers in the most exquisite and efficacious forms: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Eucharistic Communion, supplications and acts of adoration and reparation, spontaneous immolations and sufferings endured in a Christian manner; prayers of which the echo reached Us during all these days immediately following the sad events and which brought Us great consolation, and never so strong and so consoling as on this sacred and solemn day dedicated to the memory of the Princes of the Apostles, the day on which Divine Providence disposed that We were able to finish this Encyclical Letter.

Everything is definitely promised in answer to prayer: if the answer be not the re-establishment of serene and tranquil relations, it will have its answer at any rate in Christian patience, in holy courage, in the infallible joy of suffering something with Jesus and for Jesus, with the youth and for the youth so dear to Him, until the hour hidden in the mystery of the Divine Heart which will infallibly be the most opportune for the cause of truth and of good.

Since from so many prayers We must hope for everything, and since everything is possible to that God who has promised everything in answer to prayer, We have confident hope that He will illumine minds to truth and turn wills to good, so that the Church of God, which wishes nothing from the State that belongs to the competence of the State, will cease to be asked for that which is the Church's competence—the education and the Christian formation of youth—and this not through human favor, but by Divine mandate, and that which therefore she always asks and will always ask with an insistence and an intransigence which cannot cease or waver, because it does not come from human desire or design, or from human ideas, changeable in

different times and places and circumstances, but from Divine and inviolable disposition.

We are inspired also by faith and confidence to believe that good undoubtedly will come from the recognition of such a truth and of such a right.

As the Father of all the redeemed, the Vicar of that Redeemer who, after having taught and commanded all to love their enemies, died pardoning those who were crucifying Him, is not and never will be the enemy of anyone, so all good and true sons, those Catholics who wish to remain worthy of the name of Catholic, will do the same. But they will never be able to agree to adopt or to favor maxims or ways of thinking and acting contrary to the rights of the Church and to the welfare of souls and therefore contrary to the rights of Almighty God. How preferable to this irreducible division of minds and of wills would be the peaceful and tranquil union of thoughts and of feelings that, through happy necessity, could not help becoming transformed into the fruitful cooperation of all for the true good and for the common good, and that with the sympathetic applause of the Catholics of the world, instead of, as at present, with universal blame and discontent.

We pray the God of all mercies, through the intercession of His Blessed Mother who so recently smiled on us from the splendors of her pluricentenary celebration, and of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, that He make us all to see that which is proper to do, and give us all the force to put it into effect. May Our Apostolic Blessing, the augury and pledge of Divine blessings, descend upon you, Venerable Brethren, on your clergy, on your people, and remain forever.

Given at Rome, from the Vatican, on the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, June 29, 1931.

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